

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-31 and 33-49 were previously pending.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephonic interviews held on October 3, 2006 in which the Examiner agreed to remove that remaining ground for rejection and issue a Notice of Allowance for the pending claims as amended herewith.

As agreed with the Examiner, Applicants have amended all of the independent claims 1, 35 and 41 to include a metal support surface “which is made of gold, silver or copper, or which is a substrate that is coated with gold, silver or copper, said substrate selected from the group consisting of inorganic silicate glass, alkylamino functionalized controlled-pore glass, silica, alumina beads, organic polystyrene, polyacrylamide, Sephadex, and agarose.” This limitation finds support on page 12, lines 10-16 of the Applicants’ specification. Dependent claims 39 and 42 have been amended to delete this metal support limitation as a result of the aforementioned amendment of the independent claims 35 and 41 from which they depend respectively. Dependent claim 17 has been amended to correct its dependency to claim 1.

It is noted however, that the aforementioned amendments to claims 1, 35 and 41 were not made for any reasons related to patentability, as those claims were already patentable over the cited prior art. That is, as explained to the Examiner during the interviews and in Applicants *Response* filed June 13, 2006, the prior art fails to teach, suggest or disclose anywhere the elements “metal support surface” and a “conjugate which is releasably bound to the support surface and is released from said surface upon coordination with the metal ion” *June 13, 2006 Response*, pp. 3-7. As such, there is no surrender or disavowal of any subject matter as a result of this Amendment.

Applicants have also amended 7, 9, 10, 38 and 41 to delete any references to “derivatives.” Applicants note that these amendments were not made for any reasons related to patentability and do not affect the scope of the amended claims since “derivatives” still fall within the scope of the amended claims (*i.e.*, cysteine amino acid residue derivative still reads on cysteine amino acid residue). As such, there is also no surrender or disavowal of any subject matter as a result of this Amendment.

Claims 15, 32, and 43-44 have been cancelled. Thus, claims 1-14, 16-31, 33-42 and 45-49 are currently pending.

In light of the present amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance, early notice of which is earnestly sought. If any outstanding issues remain, the Examiner is invited to telephone Applicants’ representatives to discuss the same.

No fees are believed to be required for the filing of this *Response to Office Action*. However, please charge any additional required fees, and credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. 50-0540.

Respectfully submitted,

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